



Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

Phone: (651) 602-7900
FAX: (651) 602-7914

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SUBJECT: PER-SAFTY AND HEALTH

Purpose. To provide information on Alzheimer's Disease.

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Ever forget about an appointment or where you put your car keys and wonder aloud half-seriously, "Is this Alzheimer's?" Although forgetfulness is a sign of Alzheimer's Disease, this doesn't mean you have to worry about occasional memory lapses. Alzheimer's Disease is about much more than memory. It's a neurological disease that attacks and changes the brain, according to the American Medical Association. It affects memory, judgment, personality and language.

The exact cause of Alzheimer's Disease is not known, but it tends to occur after age 65, according to the Administration on Aging. There is no cure, and symptoms usually appear slowly and slyly. The following are some of the warning signs of Alzheimer's Disease:

- Memory loss that occurs on a frequent basis and that sometimes persists.
- Difficulty performing familiar tasks, such as using a common appliance or preparing a meal.
- Substituting unusual words when speaking, or forgetting simple words.
- Getting lost in familiar areas, or not knowing how to find your way back home.
- Poor judgment, such as dressing inappropriately or buying unnecessary items.
- Odd misplacement of items, such as putting the iron in the refrigerator.
- Personality change to extreme suspiciousness, dependency or fear.
- Loss of initiative, such as excessive sleeping or TV watching.

Keep in mind, however, that the symptoms associated with Alzheimer's Disease can instead be signs of other, treatable problems-such as depression, nutrition deficiencies or metabolic conditions.

For more information, contact the Alzheimer's Association on the web at www.alz.org or call 1-800-272-9300.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

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